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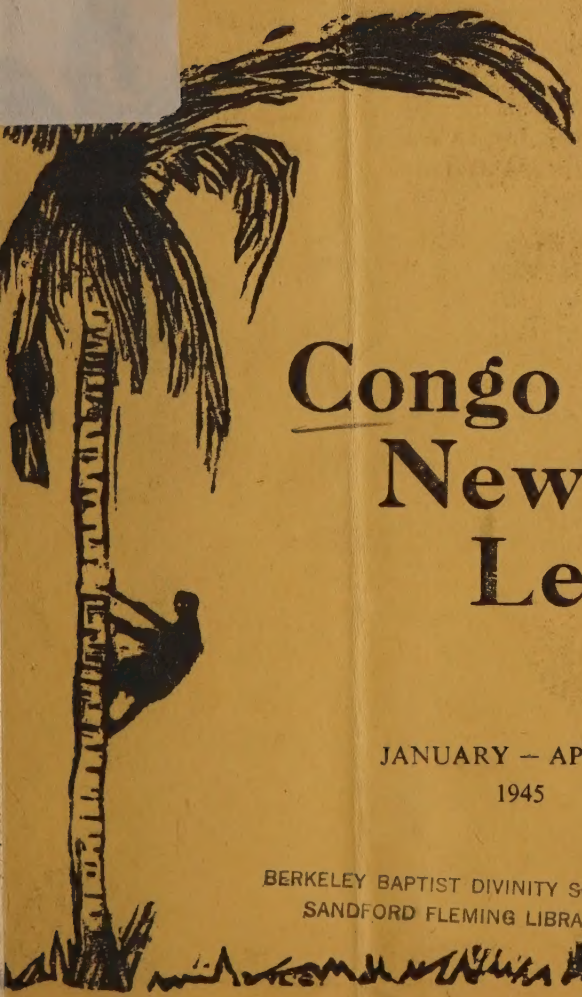

Congo News Letter

JANUARY – APRIL
1945

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1945-47

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Published Quarterly by the
Missionaries of the A. B. F. M. S.

Published at Sims House Press, Léopoldville.
Subscription price 25 cents per year.
Subscriptions may be sent to Treasurer A.B.F.M.S.
152 Madison Avenue, New York, 16 N.Y.
Subscription price in Congo 10 francs.
Address correspondence to Editor C.N.L.,
A.B.F.M.S., Léopoldville II
Congo Belge.

Congo News Letter.

Vol. XXXVI JANUARY — APRIL 1945 Nos. 1 & 2.

MISS SHANK VISITS VANGA

The high spot of the dry season was Miss Shank's visit with us. Men secretaries had visited here before but never a woman, so her arrival was eagerly anticipated. Some thought she looked too young to have white hair, they decided that she washed it too often and therefore it had become white.

The Sunday she spent at Vanga there was a large eager crowd of visitors. The entire church service was conducted by the station women. Many words of appreciation were said by them. Her inspiring message was appreciated by all. The women mentioned the fact that Miss Shank had braved the dangers of war to come to them at this time. Prayers of thankfulness were made to God for bringing her to us safely in spite of many difficulties.

Village women and girls were introduced to their white mama when she spent a few days with me at a girls' camp. Those were days of inspiration for me as we fellowshipped together. Her deep spiritual insight, her sympathy and vision were tonic to a tired missionary. Saturday afternoon at twilight about 600 people, including 75 pastors and teachers, gathered in the large mud church for a pre-communion service. All day pilgrims had been arriving with their sleeping mats and cooking pots for this was a great event. We also had a meeting with the pastors' and teachers' wives. We found them enthusiastic and interested but doing very little themselves to uplift the village women. That evening we met with the pastors and teachers. That meeting meant a great deal to them and they freely discussed their problems. Old pastor Izani stood up and said: "You dogs (turning to the teachers and pastors) have been doing a lot of growling. Tonight we have the leopards (turning to us) with us. Leopards are wise. Now you growl at them until they impress it upon their people that we need more missionaries in Congo."

I am sure that Miss Shank was impressed before she left that meeting.

Dr. Freas joined us for the Sunday service followed by communion. That great church was packed and many stood on the outside, little children packed around us fearing they would miss one motion of the white mama. Miss Shank gave a challenging message to an eager audience. It was a bright, beautiful day and the Lord was certainly in our midst as we gathered with our coloured brethren around the Lord's table. After a hurried lunch, Dr. Freas drove Miss Shank to Banningville where she was to get a plane for Tondo. Many words of appreciation were said, and we felt a bit lonely as she drove away. We hope that her visit meant as much to her as it did to us.

RUTH DICKEY

COLLOQUY OF CONGO WOMEN AT TONDO

She came, she saw, and she conquered the hearts of Congo women. They speak of Miss Shank as one personifying a real interest on the part of American girls and women for African girls and women. Otherwise why would she have come so far and all alone?

"There used to be many missionaries, ten and twelve even, when the world was poor and the Mission young. Formerly shipping cases and trunks used to bring clothing, trinkets, toys, Sunday School lesson pictures and school supplies. Now for years the missionaries are fewer and fewer and the trunks less and less till only hospital supplies are seen. Yes, we thought surely American Christians, root of the witnessing Church in the world, had wholly forgotten the branches of the Tree so sparingly trickled the sap to our out stretched, beseeching and parched branches.

"Yes, we've been working and witnessing and God has blessed us somewhat. But the Devil has also been working and enticed hundreds by his pleasant ways and glibly made promises. And because we little children in the Faith could see small tangible proof of your parental love, care and responsibility, we thought you in America had ceased to care, and lacked concern for us and our growth in the Christian way, a matter so new and strange yet withal so wonderful.

membered us, not with new teachers, neither trunks with things, but with one of themselves, Mama Shank, one like Joshua of old, a spy to discover us, what like we are and what our needs. She came to us, she asked us our thoughts she visited in our huts and held our babies in her arms, and then she taught us.

"She told us of a bird with a message of salvation written on its wings, and sent from God to men. And the bird was happy to carry God's message. But when he got to earth everyone remarked on his comeliness and especially on the beauty of his wings. This pleased the bird and made him very proud, and being admired, he admired himself and forgot God's message of salvation to men.

"And because she told this parable, Mama Shank the voice of American Christian women, we know it is as a pledge that they are going to remember again God's message written on their hearts to once more teach and save and heal us by sending many teachers, preachers, doctors and nurses, and also the things these missionaries need to carry on their work."

"And weak though we are and still so ignorant of many of God's ways and Words, we pledge ourselves to try and live faithfully with Christ's help so that our husbands, children and friends may come to Jesus and be saved. Then after you and we have worked a little longer together, God will surely be pleased to see a new matter in our midst and a new word in our vocabulary:—Mama Shank explained it as living together, husband wife and children living in one house, eating at one table, praying together daily, and growing in grace and the knowledge of God, the family altogether as one. When we see this matter fulfilled, even as a babe new born survives and grows to develop personality and individuality, eventually requires that we give him a name, even so shall we find a new and suitable name for that which we do not yet have, that which Mama Shank and our missionaries strive to attain by their example and teaching and insist on calling in their language "The Christian Home."

MARGUERITE ELDREDGE

MAMA SHANK — NKULUNTU

One can never know the wealth of good will that Miss Shank brought with her to Banza Manteke. First of all, to think that she was our Nkuluntu Fancy a woman being sent way from 'Mputu' (a foreign country) to Congo to help the women and to see what was being done. Yes, the native women had heard of men 'bakuluntus' but never before had they heard of a women nkuluntu. Congo is still in many respects a man's country so some things are hard to understand when it comes to women.

The word 'nkuluntu' is a very expressive word and broad. It means the head, the chief, the authoritative one, the respected one, the honored one, a superior. A native proverb says, "When an nkuluntu speaks, it is the truth". In hunting they have an interesting expression 'Nkuluntu ambwa' which means the best dog of chase. So Mama Shank was quite somebody.

Our natives still speak often of Mama Shank and say, "Kedika, Mama Shank tomene zaya mambu meto ye bifu bieto". (Truthfully Mama Shank understands our problems.) They felt that she loved them and wanted to help them. The women will never forget her messages. The parable of the beggar who only gave a kernel of rice to the king, will not be forgotten They declared that they would give more to Christ. The message of the women around the world stand out vividly in their memories. On one occasion we were coming down the Congo River, it was late and dark. One of the women was shivering and Miss Shank took off her sweater and put it around the woman. It made a great impression to think that this 'nkuluntu' from 'mputu' would do that.

Comparatively speaking very little has been done for the Congo women. Few know how to read. However there have been wonderful achievements through our Boarding Schools, and we are anticipating even greater things. Another important phase of our women's work is the baby clinic and pre-natal clinic here on the station where mothers are taught things of great value to the Congo home.

Miss Shank had the opportunity of visiting several of

our sub-dispensaries and was surprised at what the nurses were doing. At four of our dispensaries we have baby clinics. She remarked about the cleanliness and order of the mothers.

Our sub-dispensaries deserve the dignified name of hospital because that is what they are, the nurses in charge not only dispense drugs but take care of in-patients. Women nurses are helping in the baby clinics and they are doing an outstanding work.

From what kind of homes do these women come, from what kind of villages? Their villages are small, an average village seems to be about two hundred with ten, twenty or more huts. The women live for the most part in their cook houses. Very few eat with their husbands who eat first with their friends then the wife and children have their turn. Authority is invested in the maternal uncle, there is little co-operation in the home, there is a double standard, wife beating seems to be prevalent. Fortunately, these things are changing. The father is beginning to have a say in the child.

One of our biggest problems is the dowry system. Oftentimes the dowry is too high causing problems and then again if the dowry is too low it causes problems. One can almost pick out the women who have been purchased with a low dowry or even without a dowry. We have one such case at Banza Manteke. Her husband is only interested in getting children, not in seeing that she has the clothes that appeal to a woman. Fortunately her father is a Christian and helps her.

Miss Shank came to Banza Manteke and met the Congo woman with her problems. She came with understanding and love, and was the better able to understand their problems because of her experience in Burma. Time and time again she remarked that we must emphasize more the work among women. We must give ourselves more to their needs, and help them realize their tremendous possibilities, their responsibilities in helping create and develop a happy home life. Our Congo women felt that Miss Shank was here to help them find that which gives value and beauty to life. So the native women still mention Nkuluntu Mama Shank with a feeling of ownership and pride because she came to help them — the Women of Congo.

ESTHER J. EHNBOM

MISS SHANK' S VISIT TO MOANZA

The long looked for day had come at last when we could welcome our own Mission Secretary into our midst. What happiness and expectation were seen on the faces of all as we went about our work. We were exceedingly sorry that our co-workers the Browns could not be with us. Eva and I did not feel like much of a staff, but we were more than happy to have our own W.A.B.F.M.S, secretary come to see where we live and work and have our being. And Moanza, the real MOANZA, the men and women who faithfully carry on year after year with small remuneration and less glamour, they took her in. Men, women and children came to see this woman who had come all the way from "Mputu" very specially to see the work among the women. What did it matter that she was a woman and had come specially for the women. They felt that she loved them all and wished to help them all. They sensed her sympathy even though they could not understand her language, They took her in and made her their own.

But the women overflowed in their joy that at last a woman had come all the way from America to see them and the work done among them. They who were mere women had their own special visitor. They could talk of nothing else. They loved her, took her in and would have kept her. At least one baby, beautiful, smiling Pemba, adopted her, perhaps the adoption was mutual.

At her coming we outlined our program for the few days she would be here. Each day had to count during her short stay with us. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday would be busy, but Thursday would be a hard day. The day came and we had a nice, though hot and dusty trip to one of our Regional Schools, some four or five kilometers away and to a nearby village. We had no car nor tipoy but "shank's mare" worked well, and the day was enjoyed by all.

The next day the doctor came to take our guest to Vanga. A busy day was spent trying to keep the operating room going and assisting with a tea for some 60 women who came to honor and thank Miss Shank for coming to remote Moanza. The fact that she was so quickly taken into their hearts speaks well for our beloved secretary. The visit was all too soon over, but the visitor will not soon be forgotten. We hear her

name often as the women come together. One Sunday as we went to some village to hold services, they sang about her, and the way did not seem so long, nor the heat so oppressive as we rememberd her. We hope the time may not be long before we have another and a longer visit.

ALICE JORGENSON.

OUR CHIEF ARRIVES

What joy prevailed among our women last July. A woman was coming from the States to see them and to see how the Christian women at home could better help them, the Congo women. They were as excited as any group of children. Congo is strongly a man's country. Yes, and even our churches have felt it best to follow that pattern during these first years. Then to have someone come to visit the women was something very special.

The first meeting for just women was Sunday P.M. Our average Sunday School attendance for women is 30. When we saw a group of 90 women we knew that they really were interested. They were so happy and proud when Miss Shank asked them their opinions and let them ask questions and make requests.

Friday P.M. Alice and I called in some of the women for tea. Our home is rather small so we invited 30. To our amazement 60 mothers came and each with at least one child. They sat on the floor, on benches, in the bedroom, in the dining room etc. They were all so happy and so delighted to talk with their visitor again. They still talk about her visit and only wish that she might be their very own missionary right here at Moanza.

I'm not surprised that she won their hearts for we love her ourselves. She's just one grand "encourager" and helper. We need her in New York, but we hope someday, when air-service is improved, she'll be able to visit us again.

EVA SHEPARD

A WOMAN COULD OPEN HER BIBLE AND READ

"Come and look, here is a woman who can open her Bible and read". These were the amazed words that I heard in a little Bayaka village on the first day of a recent trip that we made to that tribe. The woman was Rachel Buabubi, the wife of our most recent graduate from the pastors'

training school at Kimpese. She was seated at the door of the little mud hut where they were spending the night, and readlng in her Bible, when some girl spied her and immediately called the girls and women of the village to "come and look". Buabubi herself is a Muyaka and one of the very few women of that tribe who can read. Certainly in many of the villages that we visited they had never before seen a women of their own people who could read fluently, and it was no wonder that they were impressed.

Buabubi and her husband, Yilela, came back to Kikongo in the summer of 1944 after having spent four years at Kimpese in the lower Congo. His home village is in the southern section of our field, a good five or six days' journey on foot from the mission station. With a new baby, born after their return to Kikongo, it hardly seemed possible for her to make that long trip. So Yilela went by himself. During the four years of absence, he had forgotten a great deal of the dirt and the heathenism so prevalent in the Bayaka tribe, and he was not only surprised but he was shocked as well at what he saw. He told us, on his return, that his sister had wanted to see Buabubi and the children as soon as they could possibly get up there; but he had said that there would have to be some cleaning done first. "There wasn't a place in the house where they could have sat down", he said rather disgusted, "it was so filthy. But they promised to do some thorough housecleaning if we could come back".

When we planned a trip to that tribe in December, it seemed the right time for Buabubi and the children to go along in the car. Yilela would be going anyway, as he has been helping on all the evangelistic trips. We had some misgivings, and it did mean very careful planning, for the capacity of the Chevrolet is decidedly limited, and adding a whole family, even with a minimum of baggage, meant that everything else that could possibly be left behind had to be omitted. But Buabubi said she would gladly help with the work along the way, and so we started out.

It was well worth while to have taken her along. She helped lead meetings, had many personal conferences with women, and thus helped in the directly evangelistic work. She nearly always addresses herself to the women even in a mixed meeting, speaking about some women in the Bible,

and applying the lesson to the daily life of the Congo women. But if she had done nothing of this, but had simply been present with her children for them to look at, it still would have been worth while. The astonishment was great that she was educated like her hushand, and the admiration equaled it that she not only had her own clothes, but that she kept the children dressed in their simple sun suits. They were kept nice and clean. Often we would arrive in a village in the late afternoon, but there was generally a little washing to do and hang out in order that it might dry and be ready for the next morning.

The children are well cared for and look much better nourished than the ordinary village child in Congo. In one village, a school boy was sitting idly on the grass when his teacher called him to take part in some work. The boy said he could not, he was too tired. "Tired? What have you been doing to get tired?" And the boy said, "I carried the child of the visiting pastor down to the water and back. He is short, that boy, but he is plenty heavy."

The children were really what climaxed Buabubi's achievement and gave her the most prestige; for they proved that a woman *can* learn to read the Bible and teach others, and still perform a Congo woman's primary duty, i.e. to have children and to feed her family. They are obedient and well behaved too, and thus different from the great majority of Congo children who usually know no discipline but who follow their own will from the time they are babies. It was a pleasure in many ways to have had their company on the trip. One day after we had seen some interesting animals on the plain, the three-year-old said in a puzzled way to his father: "We have seen monkeys and antilopes and pigs, and *lots* of people, but Tata, when are we going to see the relatives and friends?"

He had heard so much of this trip to see the relatives and friends that he had never seen in his short life that he must have formed some childish idea of his own of what a relative is and looks like. The father explained that we were seeing friends in all these villages through which we were passing. "Is this then Kambanzi?" said he. Kambanzi was the aunt's village to which they were going. So it took some time to get it all straight.

As we drove in and out among the Bayaka hills, the men talked about villages that could be seen in the distance here and there, the teachers who were on the job and those who had left the work, the State requirement in the rubber production, and such things. But we noticed that Buabubi's interests were primarily those of a woman. "Look at that peanut field. That will give a good yield. — See those large manioc gardens on the hill side, that has been a hard place to hoe. — Just look at the caterpillars in the trees. Truly, isn't God good to us? He gives us caterpillars to eat in the dry season; and now He gives us caterpillars in the rainy season as well! — Look at the village on top of that high hill. The women there must have a long steep climb up from the water."

Wherever we go, Yilela finds work to do — he helps in the village schools, he confers with and encourages the pastors, he seeks out the backsliders, and those who have formerly made a profession of faith but who have never come into church membership, and his burning desire is to bring them to Christ. He finds many ways of interesting them, too, so that he attracts many to the meetings who do not usually come to the services. At the two centers where we held Christmas meetings, he arranged a little pageant that the school children could put on. A dramatic moment came when the angelic choir sang. The pageant was given in the open, against one wall of the chapel. He had a number of the school children hidden on the opposite side of the roof. and at the right moment, they popped their heads over the ridge and burst into song. The audience loved it.

Yilela's great desire is to unite the Bayaka Christians into one united whole that will go forward for Christ While he thinks that would soon be done if they had a mission station of their own, he does not sit down and wait for that to come. He is spending his time visiting the churches and the many villages on foot, preaching, teaching, smiling, giving, and building up.

Buabubi is helping in the meantime here on the mission station. She takes care of her family, does regular teaching in the girls' and women's school, has a Sunday School class, and takes a turn at leading prayer meetings and other services. We believe that her example will do much to spur

other girls on to get an education so they too can "open their Bible and read."

RHODA ARMSTRONG

FOOD! FOOD! FOOD!

This word has been on the lips, and in the ears and in the prayers of Moanza missionaries for three years. The hospital patients crying for food, many dying from malnutrition. Our school youngsters are so often saying that they are hungry and we missionaries talking and talking about how to get more food for them and to get them to eat it. If you know of folks who can make things grow in sandy soil and hot climate send him, her, or them along to us. But along with knowledge of soil must be a love of the people for a big share of the work is to persuade the folks to do what is good for them.

Potential food is around us in abundance. Due to taboos, physical weakness from worms and malaria, plus a hot climate makes the folks a bit more lazy than usual.

Kindolo, one of our school boys is an excellent fisher. In his village he caught a great many until his people decided he must have a special power of some sort—that perhaps he was being used by the spirits. His people said, "Never go to the river to fish again. If you do you will die. We will kill you." We tried to persuade him to catch fish for us from our river here but he is just too tied down by fear. It is just the same if a person is a good hunter. He just does not dare bring home too much meat.

Mfuta, one of our Christian leaders, originally from Sona Bata, but has been here now for several years, has had an excellent garden. The people began saying that he was possessed by a spirit. He began giving away most of the food. They have not accused him much since. His garden was good simply because he worked hard.

We can buy millet for our folk, at least a fair supply. But—a few years ago the story was spread that some people at Kitona died from eating it. It swelled in their stomachs. That story has become so widely believed that over half of our school boys will not eat it even if they are starving. The truth of the story probably is that the people did not cook

it. It does require a long cooking. Another story that is accepted is that rice gives one sore eyes etc, etc. Alice and her helpers at the hospital are trying their best to prove these stories untrue.

The State is insisting that the people plant more gardens. That is fine but who is going to help these folks overcome their taboos? Only Christ can teach these people to love each other and to divide truth from falsehood. The Challenge is here. Who will meet it in His strength?

EVA SHEPARD

POTS OF OIL

White Cross boxes are like the widow's pot of oil. (II Kings 4:1-7) During the war we have been very careful to use these supplies in such a way that they bring the most good to the largest number of people. Can't you see the widow picking out the biggest and best pots to fill up first? There are thousands of vessels in Congo that have been filled with oil. There are tall pots and little pots, clean and dirty pots, white pots and brownish pots, and all kinds of pots.

There are almost a thousand babies who come to Kikongo baby clinic centers carried on mother's back, some coming from villages 6 and 9 miles away from the "kilo". The people call the clinics "kilo" because the babies are weighed in kilograms. New babies after coming four times get a blanket. If baby is kept nice and clean and free from the itch, he gets a little shirt about twice a year. For many these are their first garments unless they were fortunate enough to have been born at the hospital where they get two shirts and two blankets when dismissed. When you are weary of sewing baby shirts and blankets, think of some of these mothers trudging along with their babies in the blazing sun for more than 50 miles before they get the coveted blanket, and sometimes 150 and 200 miles before baby gets his shirt. Babies coming to clinic have more hope of living to wear a shirt.

There are the girls who come to Kikongo to school. Although as the years go by, more and more girls come in with larger pieces of cloth wrapped about them, there are still a number who do not know what it is to have a whole dress. Some look quite ugly when they arrive with big sticks poked in the lobes of their ears, unkempt matted hair, and

dirty rags. You would hardly believe that they are the same girls when they blossom out in real dresses made of gay patterned fabrics such as their people seldom get from the traders for their rubber so tediously gathered, and their fiber, peanuts, rice and manioc — all earned from the earth by so much back-breaking work with only the hoe and machete for tools. Most of the back-breaking toil, by the way, falls on the women and girls.

In spite of the war some of the "oil" has come over in some of the hughest boxes as surgical supplies. At Kimpese we asked our sister missions: the British Baptist Missionary Society and the Svenska Missionsforbundet (Covenant Church of Sweden) for vessels. Being cut off from supplies from home since the beginning of the war, they had lots of them. They had been buying every bit of the many bandages needed in this land of sores. You would have liked to watch one of their nurses as she helped fill their pots. She was as grateful and happy as the widow must have been as she saw the pots fill up and as she poured out the oil. When the pots arrived at their destination they were thought too full. Other vessels were filled up for their neighboring stations until the oil ran over the borders into Angola and French Equatorial Africa into pots. Some of the Kikongo's surplus oil filled pots of the orphaned mission of the Baptists of Denmark over a thousand miles away in Urundi.

Yet only a few pots are filled. We are so few to gather them, we wish we were quins. Our debt can't be paid until all the vessels are filled with our Saviour's love. "BORROW THEE VESSELS ABROAD."

GRACE COOPER

OUT OF BALANCE

At our graduation exercises held when the new school term opened in August, we had only three boys who had finished school and who were to receive their certificates. All three of them are fine boys and we have hopes of keeping all of them in active Christian work. Their testimonies given as their part in the exercises were heart-warming and seemed to be sincere. One hopes to go to the medical training school and the other may go to Kimpese for either pas-

tors' or monitors' training. One of these is from the Bayanzi tribe and it would please us very much if he would become the first Muyanzi pastor from this section of the tribe.

The night of the baccalaureate sermon, we had all our pastors in, and Louis Mawela was chosen to give the talk. He used the occasion to give his testimony and tell of his re-conversion and consecration. He is well above the average in intelligence, he made a fine record during his undergraduate days at Kimpese, and upon his return was a very good help to us here. But the desire for more money preyed on his mind, and he did not seek help and strength from God. The result was that he insisted we give him his discharge. Since he felt that way, he was no use as a pastor, so he was released. He promptly got a job with a local trader, and so far as we know he maintained his church membership in good order. Of course we felt his loss in the work keenly, and it had a bad effect on the rest of the pastors. We used every opportunity to speak to him of his call to serve God, feeling that he was too fine a person to devote his talents to trading.

In speaking directly to the three graduates, he gave the following testimony: He had received a letter from one of the missionaries, and in the letter in three different places it was written: "We love you." He was unable to sleep well and his thoughts were troubled. In subsequent readings and in thinking over his life, he tried to make it balance with this love of those who had trained him from his childhood for Christian service. He said that he put the three measures of love on one side of the balance, then he put his whole salary on the other side but it did not tip the scales. Then he put in the commission he got on both sales and purchases of fiber and rubber, but still the love was too great. Then he added all he could make by tailoring, but still his side was too light. He wanted to balance the scales, but what else did he have to put in? He tried to convince himself that he had nothing more, that he had put in his whole earning power and it was not enough, so it seemed he was just doomed to live an unbalanced life. But having been trained as a pastor, knowing God's Word and having heard God's voice, he was unable to go on deceiving himself. At last he decided that he simply could

not go on living that way, that he must return to a life of service and must balance things up by putting in his own life, his own love, and his own talents. "Now," he said, "I again enjoy my food, I sleep well, and I do not always feel as though I were being pulled to one side. I am going the way God wants me to go and I am happy. Even though God's love overbalances the scales, I know that His forgiveness and my obedience have brought me up to the level where God wants me." Then he cautioned the youngsters against trying to go contrary to the will of God.

We trust that not only the three young graduates profited from this testimony, but that every one who heard it realized that it was a message direct from our heavenly Father.

B. W. ARMSTRONG

WOMEN'S DAY OF PRAYER NOTES

From Banza Manteke Esther Ehnbom writes — After the service on the Day of Prayer one of the women came and said, "Mama, we ought to do this more often". Another woman who was on the program said, "Mama, if we have this more often our timidity will be taken away". They are hungry for something which they can do and we do not have enough missionaries to do all that should be done. They are longing for richer lives and need our help.

* * *

At Leopoldville our service was announced for 8:15 but some of the girls were here at 7:30. Tho the crowd wasn't very large there was a very fine spirit and we felt the nearness of God as one after another of the women stood up and took part in prayer. — Malia, a Christian of years standing and mother of six lovely little children, prayed — "God, our hearts don't want to stay clean, but we thank you that we can come to you all the time and get help and strength." — Luzolo, who had only been out of the hospital a short time after being seriously ill, and was still too weak to carry her own baby (which she tied on the back of an older sister to carry) came in late because it took her so long to walk the one mile. When I saw her coming I knew she had made a real effort to be present, and it seemed very appropriate that we should be singing as she came in. —

"The great Physician now is near,
The sympathizing Jesus
He speaks the drooping heart to cheer
Oh, hear the voice of Jesus!"

She didn't join in the hymn but sat with bowed head. Her prayer in part was "The Church of Christ is not the buildings that we worship in but it is made up of us who believe and are Thy children. Help us to make Thy church strong and grow".

We were thrilled to think that we were a link in the chain of prayers that were encircling the world on this Women's Day of prayer.

LINDA WATKINS

DEDICATION OF CHAPEL AT IREBU

Protestant mission work at Irebu, located on the main Congo river south of Coquilhatville, is directed from Tondo. There is a large military camp at Irebu where soldiers and their families from all over the Congo meet for worship with the cathechiste. About 1894 this mission opened work at Irebu and graves of two white missionaries at Irebu remind us of their labours and our obligations to build on foundations so costly, and an obligation lightly regarded by successors for many years as interests were centered on the development of the new station at Tondo and reaching into the hinterland. But for a number of years the few Christians at Irebu, the many soldiers and even the interest of the Commandant that provision be made for the Protestant men under his command challenged us to view the work and its needs more seriously.

A sturdy little chapel in brick and cement was completed mid-year. Dedicatory services were postponed again and again as furloughs, and unexpected events arose. January 19th Pastors Frank Teva Clark and Jean Yoka from Ikoko with Nkolinto Jean, Pastor Ngando Pierre, Monitor Ikali Jean and 17 school choristers accompanied me for the special services of dedication. From 37 inquirers examined, 29 were accepted for baptism and 7 couples had the seal of the church put upon their marriages, now that both parties had entered into full fellowship with the church. You of course will be sympathetic with the difficulties one experiences in examining candidates, but Christian sergeants, notably Mibwaya Anoka

from Bas Congo, keeps in close touch with the men and assists us in appraisal and examination, and we seek to exercise the precautions which will enable these new converts to maintain at high level the Chrisitan life and witness we crave for all brothers and sisters in Christ. We covet your united prayers that all may stand fast in the Lord and in turn be soul-winners.

Jean Yoka baptized the converts in the river just in front of the chapel. He also delivered the message of dedication and a soldier prayed. Ngando Pierre challenged all with a stirring message from I Cor.3.11. Teva Frank gave the hand of fellowship at the Communion service, and Ngando performed the marriages at a 5 o'clock service.

The Tondo boys directed by Ikali (trained by Rev. H.D. Brown now on furlough) sang most acceptably at all services. On Sunday morning Lingala and Kikongo hymns were sung at the baptismal service, and also in the preaching service. Soldiers from Matadi sang once with native fifes and drums, and the vocal selection by a group of Chiluba men was really something of another world, it was so lovely. The people were too moved to clap as they had done for the others, but just sat with hands over their mouths in mute wonder and appreciation for the message in a strange tongue that had spoken to their hearts.

Yoka Jean said in part, "In early days Irebu people were fierce and killed on sight all passers-by from other tribes. But Lake Tumba folk and others traded at Coquilhatville, Bolobo and Leopoldville in the early days, and all must pass by this place of fright and death, so we went only at night, on black nights and as noiselessly as we could. Today with the Gospel and goodwill here, we call Irebu "Day-dawn". And for those who have long been in sin and in heathen darkness we want this Chapel to be a place of Day-dawn from which all will go forth bearing the marks of Christ. Pray for the cathechiste and his wife who seek to be friends and spiritual helpers to the young men and women and their children in this, for many, distant area. We have a God-given responsibility, which we accept, as our being in this land testifies. In Him may we all know victory.

MARGUERITE ELDREDGE

STATION NEWS

VANGA NEWS ITEMS

Vanga is very much on the map even though we fail to send in our news items. The months since Conference have been full and overflowing. There have been many trials and many victories too and we have all been led out into a fuller consecration to Christ through the experiences that have come to us.

Five girls' camps were held during the dry season with a total attendance of more than a thousand. There was a tremendous challenge, as I tried to meet the spiritual need of that great mass of wild, undisciplined village girls. Many girls accepted Christ but others were held back by heathen relatives. With the degeneration of morals among our young people we must face the problem of reaching our girls for Christ. Girls' camps will help to solve this problem.

The opening of school in September brought eager youth to our station, 190 boys, 135 girls and 70 children were enrolled in our station school and thousands of little children in our village schools. Some of our best monitors who have been in the work for many years felt that they must leave the work if their salaries were not raised. There were days when they failed to appear for classes and we were much burdened for them. We feared that we might have to close the boys' school, but prayer does change things and the monitors came thru victoriously, at least we hope that they have

Mr. and Mrs. Robbins profited by their vacation and came back with a little new missionary. Baby William is a healthy, happy baby and helps us all to relax. Priscilla came home for Christmas vacation and saw her baby brother for the first time. After praying for a baby brother for many years Priscilla is quite happy and thinks Baby William is quite a baby.

Our hearts were greatly saddened the latter part of

October by the illness of our beloved colleague, Dr. Freas. An army plane has taken Doctor Freas to America where we hope that he will get the medical care which will mean a quick restoration to health. The Freases have made a great contribution to the work at Vanga and are greatly missed by us all. They are constantly in our prayers. Miss Jorgenson came to help out in our emergency and remained with us during the month of November. We were happy to welcome our new missionary, Dorothy Wiseman, October 28th. After only three months in Congo we are asking her to take over the medical work at Vanga. She is tackling the big task with courage.

Mr. Robbins has spent most of his time in the district trying to visit all the church posts before leaving for furlough. How we do pray for more strong, consecrated leaders in these days when our staffing situation is so critical. The Robbins and I plan to leave for furlough before many months. Will you join us in prayer that missionaries may be sent to take over the work at Vanga. "The harvest is abundant, but the reapers are few: therefore entreat the Owner of the harvest to send more reapers into the fields." Luke10:2,3(*Weymouth*).

RUTH DICKEY

MOANZA NEWS NOTES

Eva keeps more than busy with her schools, trying to keep teachers teaching and seeing that pupils absorb and retain some knowledge. Porridge is on the menu these days, but hungry as our children have been they turn up their noses at millet mush. But Eva found it had not been properly cooked and served. Now after meting out punishment and teaching about it's food value and vitamins, even upper class boys are eager for their portion of porridge.

At the hospital we are having many cases of whooping cough, also many others who come to receive help for sick bodies. We always try to give something besides the medicines in the bottles, and pray that these crowds may go away knowing more about the Great Physician of the soul.

ALICE JORGENSON

NOTES

We extend a loving welcome to Lucy Sheila Gertrude,

who arrived at the home of Dr. and Mrs. A. J.B. Russell of Tondo, on December 13th.

* * *

How happy we are to welcome our new colleagues to the field. Doris Wiseman and Phyllis Benner arrived in January, Mr. and Mrs. Jump in early March. They are all busy studying the Kikongo language.

We are also glad to welcome back Mr. and Mrs. Henry Erickson who arrived from furlough the 13th of March. They are busy helping at Leopoldville until conference.

May God richly bless each one of you as you begin your term of service.

* * *

Word has reached us that Mr. and Mrs. J.E. Geil will not be returning to the Congo due to health reasons. We had hoped that we would have the joy of having them as colleagues for at least one more term before they retired. We miss our Tata and Mama Geil no end. We hope that Tata Geil will write us at least one more article for the C.N.L.

* * *

We miss the happy fellowship of Rev. and Mrs. S. Baiotti, who are now with the Congo Balolo Mission at Baringa. We wish them God's richest blessing as they labor there for Him.

WOMEN'S DAY OF PRAYER

What a day of blessing it was to each of us. Our women, our pastors, our teachers, just everyone seemed to respond and find spiritual uplift that day. In place of the three or four hundred our weak faith thought possible, fifteen hundred women and children attended the seven meetings that were held in our various church centers.

It was all the working of the Lord. So many adverse things happened, it seemed as if nothing was right. We had no opportunity to talk it over with our pastors, the women were working gardens and might not want to come etc, etc. Here on the station things were the worst. There were three places for our women to go in three successive days.

(1) Thursday - market at Kinwela, not at Moanza as usual.

(2) Friday - Day of Prayer for women only, something

(3) Saturday - Special Baby clinic. The state doctor was to be here. The poor folk who usually have no place to go were to have three days of activities at various places. They just couldn't keep them straight. Women from Kimwela (market was supposed to be at their village) came here for market. Men and women from quite distant villages came in here Thursday for their annual check-up on sleeping sickness. They had heard that Alice was to do it that day. The State agent does it in this territory. This could mean a serious misunderstanding with him. Oh me, oh my! To top it off our local pastor had asked the head chief of our group of villages to send all the women in on Friday. We of course do not force the women to come to worship, so possibly more trouble with the State.

Thursday evening we called in the pastor and talked it over with him. Then we had a real prayer meeting, praying that in spite of all these twisted truths and untruths, the Lord would bless the meetings. It seemed to us that only the devil himself could get truth so mixed up. The Lord heard our prayer. Friday A.M. the women came streaming in and by 10 o'clock the church was filled with 384 women and children and a special spirit of reverence seemed to prevail. How thankful we were and are.

Later the next week we received letters from our church centers filled with enthusiastic reports of the meetings. The Pastors had acted as chairmen and various women had prayed, told stories, and read scripture passages. At one center the women were so stirred by the story of Hannah that before they could close the meeting five women stood up to say that yes they must bring their children to worship and they must teach them to love God." (As part of the adapted program we had suggested that the pastors' wives tell this story emphasizing the need for the mothers to really dedicate their children to the Lord.)

Six of our station women volunteered to go to our nearest centers Mukisu and Kizalala. They left here Thursday and came back Saturday. It was a seven-hour walk each way. The Lord made them a blessing and gave them great joy in doing His service. At the close of the meeting an old man talked with them and said how much he had enjoyed the meeting. He was going home to tell all the people in his

village the story of Hannah and of the little girl "Not Wanted". Evidently it was something so new to have women tell stories that he had really listened and understood.

As we planned for the meeting we wondered how we could find time for it in our already crowded days. By sharing the various tasks with our leaders it didn't make too big a burden. Alice and her nurses translated the story of "Not Wanted" from Margaret Applegarth's "Primary Mission Stories". Everyone just loved the story. It was different and yet so similar to their lives and their fetish worship. It really was a real blessing to all. The teachers and myself adapted the rest of the program and sent it to the pastors with an explanatory letter. It made our hearts ache, the eagerness with which the pastors received this new material and the joy with which they worked to carry it out Oh, that we had a larger staff so that we could give them new material more frequently.

The Lord greatly blessed our small efforts and through them blessed so many people. We are most thankful. I'm sure it was not our prayers alone that brought the blessing but those of the women around the world. May the Lord bless each one of them.

The "Afterpiece"——

As Alice and I were leaving the church feeling happy that it was all over, a group of six village chiefs came to us. They wanted their gift for having obeyed the big chief and brought in so many of the women of their villages What to do? We just do *not* believe in bribing people to come to our church to worship and yet we did not want to offend these chiefs.

We invited them to our home. What a wild looking bunch of men. Their skins and what clothes they wore were covered with oil and camwood powder, their hair braided in weird arrangements and plastered thick with mud and oil. Some wore second hand coats or hats which added a final touch to their odd appearance.

As they entered we offered them our dining room chairs to sit on. They could be and were scrubbed when they left. We served them "Kool Aid" drink and cookies and played several records for them. They particularly enjoyed Lily Pons singing "The Russian Nightingale". One of the chiefs wore a piece of grass cloth for a kerchief. It had plenty of fringe

which he made fly in all directions when he laughed. Apologies to Lily Pons, he laughed hardest when he heard her sing. It was so different and so new, the only way that he knew to show his appreciation was to laugh.

The climax to food and music was our orphan baby of three months. It was his feeding time. When they saw Alice feeding him Klim from a bottle they were all eyes and began talking and pointing their fingers, the grass cloth went flying in all directions again. After an hour or so they left very satisfied and very happy. Never a word about gifts. We hope they will visit us often. They could be such splendid men if they would just let the Lord rule in their lives, and what an influence for good among their people. Do pray with us that they soon will accept Christ as their Lord and Master.

EVA SHEPARD

THE GIFT OF LOVING

It is in loving, not in being loved,
The heart is blessed;
It is in giving, not in seeking gifts,
We find our quest.
If thou art hungry, lacking heavenly bread,
Give hope and cheer.
If thou art sad and wouldst be comforted,
Stay sorrow's tear,
Whatever be thy longing or thy need,
That do thou give.
So shall thy soul be fed, and thou, indeed,
Shalt truly live.

— M. ELLA RUSSELL

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT

On Sunday morning, April 15, a large group assembled silently at the protestant Chapel at Leopoldville Est. Two days before, to Americans, so far from home and momentarily expecting radio news of final Victory, had come instead the sad message of the death of their President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. So — instead of meeting for the customary Sunday worship — they, together with their Allied friends, assembled for a commemoration service. In the audience were high civil and military authorities of Belgian Congo and French Equatorial Africa, the diplomatic corps, representatives of military missions in the capital, veterans of the former war, representatives of commerce and industry, residents of Leopoldville, missionaries en route to or from their home countries, as well as those stationed in the city, and a representative group of natives from various African colonies. All had come to pay homage to the late President of the United States.

Reverend George W. Carpenter, D. D., officiated. The service commenced with Scripture readings and prayer followed by the singing of "America" by the audience. The American Consul General, Robert L. Buell, then gave the memorial address. After commenting on the loss, not only to America, but to all freedom-loving peoples and paying tribute to the services of the late President, Mr. Buell called attention to the fact that exactly 80 years ago (April 15, 1865) America had mourned in a similar way. Drawing comparisons between the services, the deaths, and the fame of Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt, he concluded his oration by quoting from Lincoln's famous Gettysburg speech.

The audience stood in absolute silence for the benediction, followed by the music of "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "La Brabanconne."

Filing out in quiet ranks, the group probably heard the echo of the words just recalled, not only in their minds but in their hearts—

" — — that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion."

RUTH ERICKSON

CONGO MISSION DIRECTORY

Listed in order of arrival on field or at station — present term

BANZA MANTEKE

Miss Mary Bonar
Miss Esther Ehnbom
Rev. and Mrs. C. Jump

MOANZA

Rev. and Mrs. L.A.Brown
Miss Alice Jorgenson
Miss Eva Shepard

TONDO

Miss Marguerite Eldredge
Dr. and Mrs. A.J.B.Russell (B.M.S.)
Miss P. Russell (B.M.S.)

LEOPOLDVILLE

Mr. and Mrs. H.J. Watkins
Miss Phyllis Benner
Rev. and Mrs. H. Erickson

KIKONGO

Miss Agnes Anderson
Rev. and Mrs. B.W. Armstrong
Miss Grace Cooper

VANGA

Rev. and Mrs. W.F.Robbins
Miss Ruth Dickey
Miss Dorothy Wiseman

KIMPESE

Rev. and Mrs. E. G. Hall

SONA BATA

Miss Emily Satterberg
Rev. and Mrs. R. Metzger
Dr. A.C. Osterholm
Miss Muriel Jennings (B.M.S.)
Miss Doris Wiseman

ON FURLOUGH OR EN ROUTE

Rev. and Mrs. E. Atkins
Miss Mildred Tice
Mrs. A.C.Osterholm
Rev. and Mrs.C. E. Smith
Dr. and Mrs. G.W.Tuttle
Miss Lena Youngsman
Miss Vendla Anderson
Rev. and Mrs. H.D.Brown
Dr. and Mrs. H.M.Freas
Rev. and Mrs. M. S. Engwall